

VZCZCXRO4669
PP RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHCO #0222 1480732
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 280732Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0945
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1448
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0442

UNCLAS COTONOU 000222

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W ACOOK
LONDON FOR PETER LORD
PARIS FOR BKANEDA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [BN](#)

SUBJECT: BENIN: PRESIDENT YAYI FORMS POLITICAL COALITION

REFERENCE: COTONOU 200

11. (U) SUMMARY: On May 16, President Yayi officially launched the Union for Presidential Plural Majority (UMPP), a coalition made up of various political parties, associations and movements, with the purpose of rallying supporters for the 2011 presidential election. The UMPP appears to complement pro-Yayi Front Cowry for the Emergence of Benin (FCBE) which is showing signs of strain due to internal rivalries. By creating this new coalition, Yayi intends to invite political forces to side with him and to endorse his candidacy in the 2011 presidential race.
END SUMMARY.

12. (U) On May 16, President Yayi presided over the ceremony for the official kick off of the Union for Presidential Plural Majority (UMPP). Ministers, political figures and supporters attended the ceremony. The UMPP is made up of 80 political parties and 150 political movements including various associations. In his opening address, Idrissou Ibrahima, the UMPP's spokesman, explained that the UMPP aimed on the one hand to support Yayi's policies for a successful mandate, and on the other hand to secure his re-election in 2011 through securing a comfortable majority in the National Assembly. Idrissou pointed out that the creation of the UMPP was President Yayi's adequate response to the opposition's increased effort to have power change hands in the 2011 presidential election (Reftel). He said that the UMPP sought to provide a concerted framework for the promotion of patriotism, peace, unity and tolerance in order to strengthen democracy, solidarity and liberties. He outlined that component parties and associations of the UMPP would keep their autonomy while coordinating political efforts to support Yayi. However, members should publicly declare their support for Yayi's agenda for the advancement of Benin.

13. (SBU) In his speech, Yayi told the audience that the UMPP is a coalition of parties that are concerned about the development of Benin. He stated that he had no political party and that he was the President of every Beninese citizen. He called on every willing political party to join the UMPP. The president's personal involvement in the ceremony is a clear sign to the opposition that he is committed to playing a more pro-active role in channeling political support towards his reelection in 2011. Many observers believe that Yayi has now put in place heavy artillery for the 2011 presidential election in response to the opposition's determination to defeat him (Reftel).

14. (U) On May 7, eleven deputies belonging to the FCBE formed their own parliamentary group and declared that they still supported Yayi. However, the active part that Wallis Zoumarou, a member of the G 13 and declared adversary to Yayi, played in the formation of this parliamentary group has puzzled everyone as to the true intention of its members. In addition to this, there have been reliable reports of growing dissatisfaction within the FCBE, whose prominent members openly voice disagreement during parliamentary sessions in the National Assembly. The candidacy of Bio Tchane, announced by some opposition members, may also account for the creation of the UMPP.

The UMPP appears poised to absorb members who are reluctant to defect from the contentious opposition group to join the FCBE because of conflicts opposing them to certain FCBE members. Since the UMPP is a coalition with new directions, its members will likely enjoy more freedom of action, while supporting Yayi's policies.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: Yayi and his supporters are now in battle order for the 2011 presidential election. A source close to the presidency told Post that Yayi is really concerned about the possible candidacy of Bio Tchane and as a result is taking no chances. Pundits believe, however, that the UMPP contains the seeds of its own disintegration because members of FCBE and UMPP will likely oppose each other and jockey for position. END COMMENT.

BOUSTANI